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Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session

Observer status in the General Assembly for the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly

Letter dated 12 November 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia and Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the Assembly of an additional item entitled "Observer status in the General Assembly for the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum on the nature and description of the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached.

It would be very much appreciated if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Donatus K. **St. Aimee**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Khalid Abdalrazag **Al Nafisee**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Yuriy A. **Sergeyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

I. Historical background

1. The Council of Presidents of the General Assembly was established in 1997 as a mechanism to coordinate the collective diplomatic and international experience of the former Presidents of the United Nations General Assembly with the aim of supporting the work of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, to further strengthen the multilateral system as the pre-eminent international mechanism to address the many global challenges faced by humankind, including sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights, among other areas. The Council emphasizes the paramount role of the General Assembly as the body of universality of the United Nations, consistent with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations pertaining to the functions and powers of the General Assembly.

II. Membership

2. The Council of Presidents consists of the former Presidents of the General Assembly as members of the Council; the President-in-Office of the General Assembly serves as an ex officio member.

III. Organizational structure

3. The Council of Presidents operates as a think tank which conducts independent analysis on international and organizational issues facing the General Assembly of the United Nations, and provides an autonomous perspective on resolving problems emanating from these issues.

4. The Council of Presidents is headed by a Chairman who is elected from among the member Presidents, and who serves for a period of three years. Provisions are also made for the election of a vice-president. The Executive Secretary, who is based at United Nations Headquarters, coordinates the day-to-day functions of the Council, and is the liaison to the United Nations system.

5. The Council of Presidents convenes an annual meeting in October/November each year at United Nations Headquarters during the session of the General Assembly. The Council also conducts special meetings away from Headquarters to address specific thematic issues.

IV. Activities

6. The Council of Presidents of the General Assembly conducts research and policy analysis on key global issues, in particular, issues on the agenda of the General Assembly. These policy analyses are widely disseminated internationally as a contribution to global deliberations. Intended activities emanating from this analysis include panel discussions on thematic areas at United Nations Headquarters during the General Assembly session, and at relevant United Nations thematic conferences and summits.

7. The Council of Presidents is also currently formulating the modalities to maximize the utilization of its collective diplomatic experience as an advisory body

to the President-in-Office of the General Assembly in addressing issues on the agenda of the Assembly.

V. Reasons for seeking observer status for the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly

8. The mandate of the Council of Presidents recognizes the constructive role that can be achieved by a formalized framework of regular communication, consultation and action between former Presidents of the General Assembly and the United Nations system towards the enhancement of international public consciousness of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and the positive contribution the former Presidents can make collectively through their accumulated experience, and national and international relationships.

9. The objectives of the Council of Presidents, emanating from its articles of association, are:

- To promote consultation and cooperation between the Council and the principal organs of the United Nations system.
- To serve as a focal point for the continuing supportive involvement of the Council of Presidents in the work and objectives of the General Assembly and to establish a linkage with the Assembly, as appropriate.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status in the General Assembly for the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Considering the unique role that the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly can play in promoting the goals of the United Nations,

1. *Decides* to invite the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.